SHANDA FANTASY ARTS

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BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FURRY ART

by Steve 'Iron Badger' Corbett

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The INNER CIRCLE

THINGS ARE CHANGING IN THE WORLD OF COMICS

It's big news in the industry but not so well known yet in the reader's circle. Diamond (the largest distributor of comic books) has changed their policies on what comics they will carry according to number of copies ordered.

This is going to change the face of comics for everyone. To be sure, part of this is due to higher gas prices being paid by shippers, printers and distributors. But the publishers are feeling it first. Several independent comics have announced they are preparing to shut down, such as STRANGERS IN PARADISE and FINDER.

Here at SFA, you are holding the first effect on us. We've gone to a thinner paper stock to save on shipping and costs.We'll be doing less experimental comics, such as LAST KISS and others and concentrating more on our core titles like SHANDA, KATMANDU, EXTINCTIONERS, ALBEDO and their annuals.

Hopefully no more changes will be coming, but we will strive to continue to bring our readers the anthropomorphic entertainment they have come to expect from Shanda Fantasy Arts for the past ten years.

Mike and Carole

www.shandafantasyarts.net

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Introduction

What you are holding in your hands is the culmination of many years of work in my efforts to learn to draw furry art.

When I started out in the mid 80s, I wasn't able to draw much at all.

I had doodled in high school, and I'd played around with the same sorts of things most boys draw- swords, guns and the occasional badly done superhero.

But I couldn't DRAW. Not in the sense that I could do any kind of really recognizable character sketches.

Furry fandom in the 80s had relatively few artists of any note compared to today. One of the best ones in the fandom was Steve Gallacci. I learned how to draw from copying what he drew in his comic of the time- ALBEDO, and the main storyline; Erma Felna of the EDF.

All of this would have been for nothing if I had not been encouraged very early on by one man, however.

Deal Whitley had kind words for me in those early days, and where plenty of other artists sneered at how primitive and poor my art was, Deal had only kind and constructive comments that concentrated on what I was doing right- rather than laughing at what I was doing wrong.

I owe a great debt to Deal Whitley for his kindness and enthusiasm.

A debt I hope to repay in some small way by writing this book and encouraging others to do what I did; to not give up and further the artform that Deal loved so much, and which was such an important part of his life when he was with us.

This book is how I give a little back to the fandom that has given me so much.

Rest in peace, Deal.

You started something wonderful, and those of us who knew you will never forget it.

Another artist I owe some gratitude to for good advice is Joshua Quagmire.

He was probably the first artist I ever wrote to-(all the way back around 1982,) and he actually wrote back to me!

His advice is still some of the best I can give to someone else.

Learn to draw what you see.

Most of being a good artist is learning to be a good observer, and applying what you actually see to what you draw, rather than what you expect to see.

Great advice, and although Josh has not been seen in the fandom for many years he is still around, and its still some of the best advice I've ever gotten.

So heres to you too, Joshua Quagmire!

What this book is:

This is a manual of how to learn to draw furry characters and art for the complete beginner. One of the things I discovered early on in learning to draw was that most instruction books or art teachers often don't teach very well, or in a simple fashion thats easy to grasp.

They know so much about art that they heap too much on a beginning student all at once, And often get frustrated or annoyed when the student cannot keep up and is overwhelmed by their sheer volume of data all at once.

Most art teachers forget what it was like to start out- and they want to jump straight to the more advanced lessons because that's whats interesting- for them.

Forgetting, ignoring, or unable to describe the most basic steps that a real beginner needs to hear first in order to learn everything else.

I seem to have a talent for explaining the basics in a simple fashion.

Some other books to look for are Preston Blaire's excellent book on animation, Jack Hamm's book on how to draw animals, and almost any of the books on cartoon or comics inking.

A last important note.

Nothing in this book will make you a great artist overnight.

Skill takes time and dedicated practice to develop.

Don't draw hoping or fishing for praise from other people right away.

Thats a trap that can depress you and make you want to quit, because almost nothing you draw at first will get you praise.

(Though people may be polite!)

Getting depressed because you don't get immediate rewards is common. Try to get beyond that, and realize that you must not give up no matter what.

Draw because you want to draw- because you have images you want to create that are uniquely your own.

Because if you keep at it and don't give up, then one day as you draw you will have that great moment that everyone gets at some point when you suddenly realise you have drawn something really cool that other people say looks good, and they will mean it.

And then you'll realise it was worth the hard work and time spent after all.

Steve Corbett.

AKA

Iron Badger.

October 2004

Credits.

I'd like to spend a moment and thank some folks who helped get this book printed.

Dave Ellis and Wolfwings; who contributed the most cash to making up the shortage from the Diamond distributor's order to make this happen and actually assured the book's printing, and who have been good and loyal friends over the years.

Katzedrach, who tossed his two cents and a bit more in as well to make the book a reality. (And who has been the source for many amusing moments at furry parties- I owe you a drink!)

Cirrel, who sent in much needed cash to support the printing at a critical time.

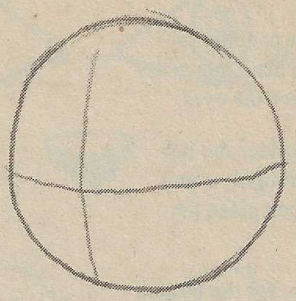
Thanks also go to Alexander Biller and others; though their support will have been recieved after I have written these dedications, so its too late for their names to be added here now.

My personal thanks to everyone who contributed money or advice to get the book printed; in an age where there is ever increasing selfishness and self serving attitudes, its truly great to see that there are still people in furry fandom who think above and beyond themselves to help others in need.

You are my Knights in spirit, keeping the dream of furry fandom alive.

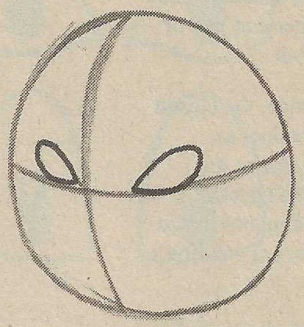
How to build a basic face

1. Start by making a circle and quartering it with the cross shape as shown to indicate the direction and tilt of the head you will draw. The "face cross" or "face X" is one of the most useful tools you have for drawing, yet I seldom see it explained. It divides the head and gives you a place to put in all the features evenly and reliably.



2. Draw in eye shapes. Don't try to define them at this stage- all you need is something to tell you where they will go. Eyes should be at or around the middle of the head, always.

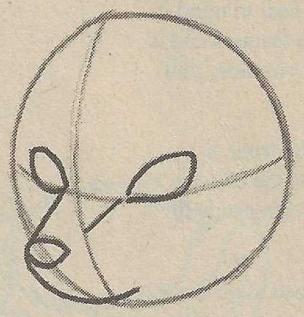
A trick for drawing in 3/4 perspective is to make the farthest eye slightly smaller and a little narrower than the closer one- this is called forced perspective, and tricks the viewer into seeing more depth than is really there.



3. Draw in the nose and connect it to the face via a short line for the muzzle. Adding another short line from the closer eye to the nose helps define the top angle of the muzzle- as its kind of a box shape. (Its not absolutely necessary, and plenty of artists don't do it, but I'm using it here.) You can add a mouth line here or not, as it suits you.

4. Add in cheeks lines to define the sides of the head. Usually, these will come up somewhere near the bottom corners of the eyes- but can reach a little higher and still be right. I've made these a little "fuzzy" by using the sawtoothed fur lines as shown, but you can do them smoother if you prefer.

Note that I have also added a short line to define the forehead on the far side- it comes up from the upper limit of the line for the cheek on that side, and nicely creates a forehead from the indent.

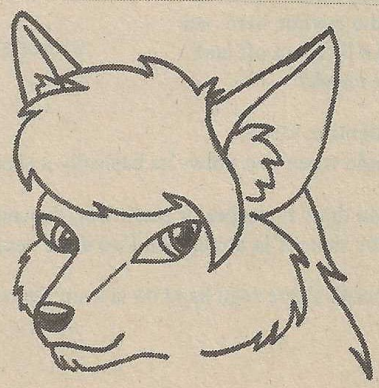


5. Draw in ears, hair if you like that look as I do, and define the eyes.

Placing ears is kind of an arbitrary decision- they should go somewhere on the upper third of the head to either side, and the only thing thats important is that the far one is also slightly smaller than the near one to match the eyes, and should be an equal distance apart from the near one.

I have placed the lower edge of the ear at the angle of the upper end of the cheek, but it can be almost anywhere and still be right as long as its on the upper third of the head somewhere, and the other one matches it.

Note that I also added a mouth line, indented the underside of the mouth slightly to indicate the upper jaw overhangs a little, and defined the chin a little more.



Facial features and where to put them.

Just some quick detail notes for drawing faces.

The eyes are at about the middle line of the head; place the nose after you place the eyes.

Most artists place the top of the cheek line roughly equal to the eyes, and then place the ears last.

A good place for the bottom of the ears in most species types is about at the upper end line of the cheeks as shown.

From the side, the closed mouth is just short line- as shown. The small line at its end helps define the cheeks where they dimple in, but its not absolutely necessary if you don't want to use it.

However, bear in mind it helps to define the features and is an aid to showing emotions and expressions.

Seen from the front, a small line to define the chin isn't always necessary- but can help define the face.

You don't need to go crazy with it- its not necessary to draw a line all the way across to show the whole jawline, for instance- just a little curved one does wonders right under the mouth.

Note that the eye seen from the side is a kind of curved triangle- the bottom and the top are curved the same way, and the iris is just a shallow oval cut off at the top for the eyelid. The cheek line doesn't have to connect to the jawline here- see how its just a little cut off and suggests the cheek?

Pay attention to the forehead angle when you draw- its basically a shelf.

You can draw it steeper or shallower, depending on tastes- but it shouldn't be too far out there, and the eye is placed close to it. It can be sharper in angle than I've done here if you like, and for species like cats, its often done that way.

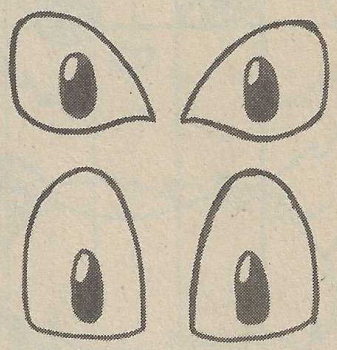
The mouth shape seen head on is a simple bow. It cam have less or more curve, but its really just a simple bow shape.

Eyes

There are many, many ways to draw eyes.

Everything from cartoony "church windows" to fully human almond shapes work in this genre. So don't be afraid to mess around and experiment until you find what works for you.

Eyes are what makes a character come alive, so its a good idea to work on them to get a handle on how to draw them early on.



A small cutout shape in the iris makes what is called a highlight- its an artistic convention to create the illusion of a reflection on the surface of a wet ball- which is what an eyeball is, of course.

Highlights should be placed symetrically- that is, both to the same side of the character to simulate a light source shining on the eye from a single source. (See the illos.) Usually the upper quadrant of one side or the other.

They should match- because not lining them up the same quickly ruins the illusion and spoils the face of the drawing- though you might not immediately be able to tell what looks wrong!

Don't forget eyelids at the top of the eyes..

There are a ton of good books out there that are all about drawing hands, eyes and other features, so we will only cover a little bit here. (We only have 40 pages to work with...)

The face here is an alternate way to draw the head and neck.

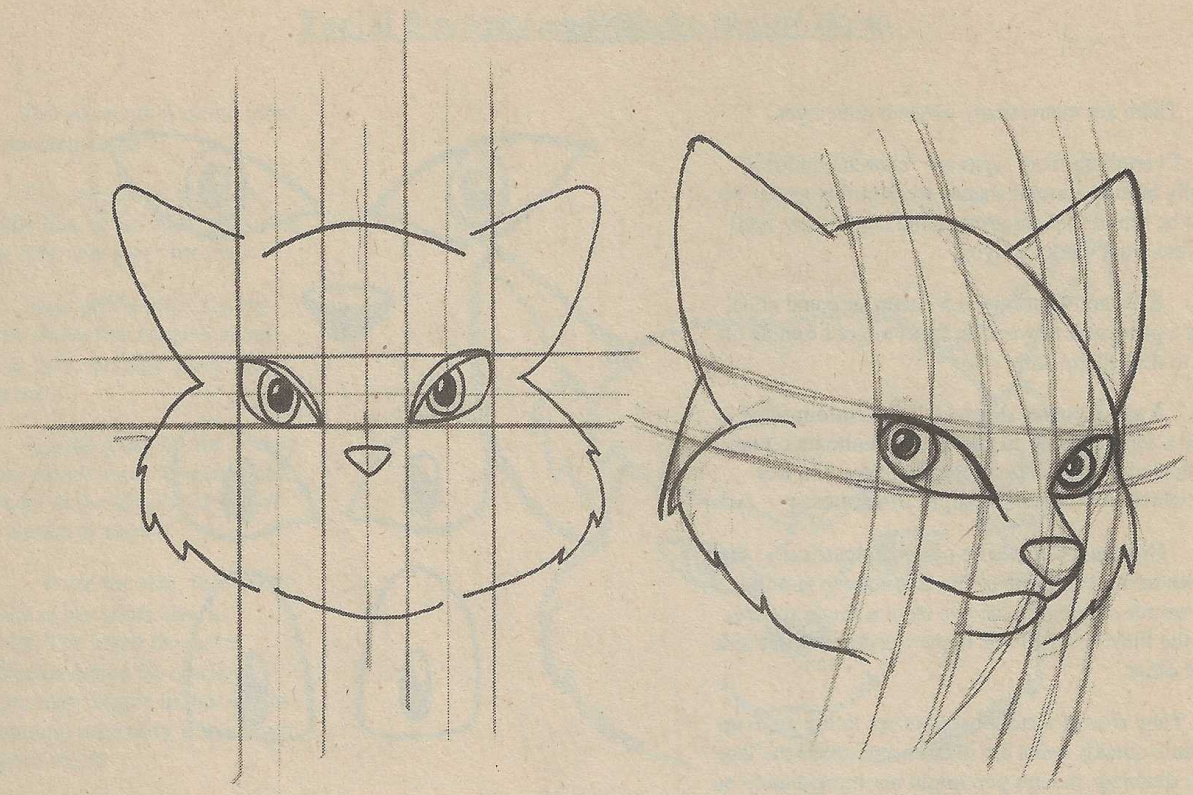
Some artists like to do a more feral/animal head design, and a quick way to do it is to thicken the neck.

Look at the illo-

Its really only a case of taking the cheeks ruffs and bringing them down to the shoulders, leaving no neck detail.

If you are looking to do more the werewolf type therian characters, this is how you start off to get more of the wolf or animal look.

No neck- just extend the cheeks down to the shoulders and blend into the chest fur.



The grid system

A trick I used in my earlier days, and one I still use from time to time to line up facial features evenly is to draw a grid of lines across the face.

This is done by first making your "X" cross for lining up the face, then adding parallel lines across and down to make a grid.

Add more parallel lines until you have a curved grid of lines.

Draw them equal distances apart, and remember to allow for forced perspective of the eyes if you are drawing in 3/4 perspective. (Make the lines a little wider closer to you, a little narrower farther away.)

Now, use your grid to line up eyes and nose by putting them in matching squares.

Make the upper line of the top of the nosepad follow the lines so its at the same angle as the eyes.

Measure the eyes to see that they are the same size if seen from the front, and the irises are in the same place on both sides.

Its a simple trick- but you'd be amazed at how much easier it makes getting faces right!

If you need more detail, just keep adding lines between lines until you have a fine enough grid to match stuff up.

How to draw a simple open mouth

1. Draw the basic head, up to the nose and cheeks as shown.

2. Draw a line for the mouth- don't worry about getting it just right for now, you can adjust it later.

Add a short line to the end of the muzzle where the mouth will connect to- this is to define the end of the muzzle/ mouth. Add a small cheek dimple line to the end of the mouth line.

3. Draw a bowed line across the bottom for the lower lips/jaw. Now draw a curved line from the far corner to the upper jaw/mouth line. Note that in this example, that line will touch about even with the middle of the nose pad.

Now draw a short line from the closer corner up to the back of the jaw/mouth line.

4. Draw in teeth as shown- this is simply a parallel line across the bottom with two points for the fangs.

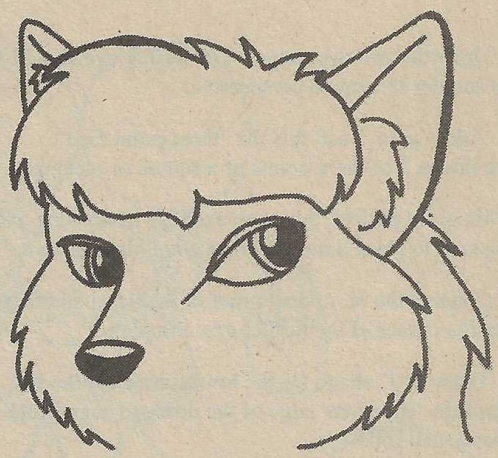
It usually looks better not to define or draw in upper teeth now unless you want the character snarling or angry.

The tongue is just a double humped line across the back of the mouth- its a simple shape, but it takes practice to make it look good.

You'll cuss a lot while learning this part- and getting a copy of Jack Hamm's very good book on how to draw animals will help a lot.

The open mouth is one of the more complex things to learn how to do in drawing furry characters, and beyond what I have room here to really cover better because we only have 40 pages...

But this will hopefully explain at least how to begin to learn how to do it.



Muzzle placement exercise

1.Draw the two eye shapes. The farther eye should be slightly smaller for forced perspective.

2. Add a nose. I call this the "three point face". Imagine this as 3 of the 4 points of a square or rectangle-

This is not perfect, but as an exercise in drawing and learning how to place a muzzle, its a good place to start.

3.Connect the far upper corner of the nosepad triangle to the inside corner of the farther eye. Simple!

4. Draw a "J" shape for the lower corner of the end of the muzzle. The lower edge of the nosepad suggest the right shape- just follow it.

5. ...And a quick lower jawline and maybe a short slanted line from the closer corner of the eye to the upper corner of the nose to suggest the other angle of the muzzle and you're done!

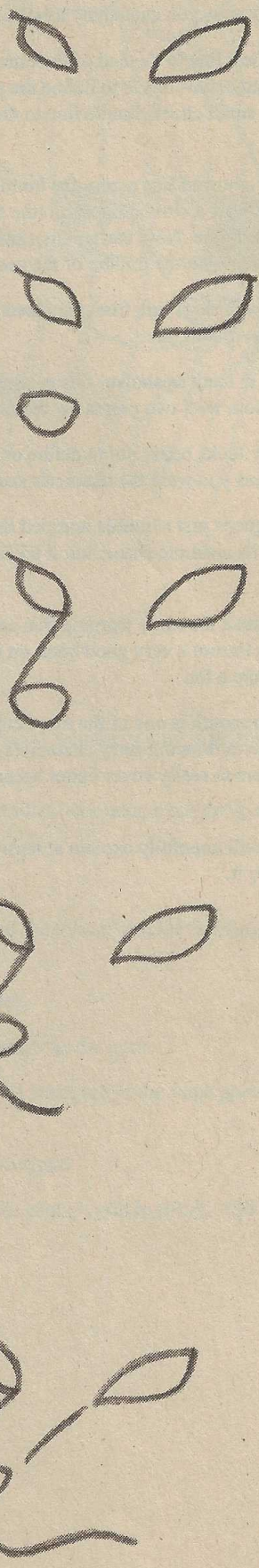
The muzzle forms itself this way.

This will not be a perfect method for every species or length of muzzle/face/nose, but its a good start in developing a feel for where to place the muzzle for the level, 3/4 view perspective that is so difficult for so many people to figure out.

Just move the nose back or forth for longer of shorter muzzles, up or down slightly for slight changes of facing up or down. (Don't forget to change the angle of the eyes as well if you do this though!)

Play with it, practice it.

It takes some time and practice to get a feel for where the facial features should go- but this single exercise will help you to learn much faster.



Proportions

Heres a list of the basic proportions in drawing a human or human bodied furry.

The body is three heads or so long, from the neck area to the bottom of the crotch.

The legs from the bottom of the foot are the same length as the body from the top of the head to the bottom of the crotch.

(You divide the entire standing character in half at the bottom of the crotch line.)

The shoulders are about two heads wide. (Roughly; make it a little wider for a muscular male, a little narrower for a slender female or young male.)

The hands are about as large as the face itself.

The upper arms are about as wide as a hand is- again, varying for sex and age, but about one hand wide on average.

The arms are as long from the shoulder to the elbow as the lower arm is from the elbow to the knuckles of the hand.

The foot is a little larger than a hand, seen at this angle- about one and a half hands long, seen from the side.

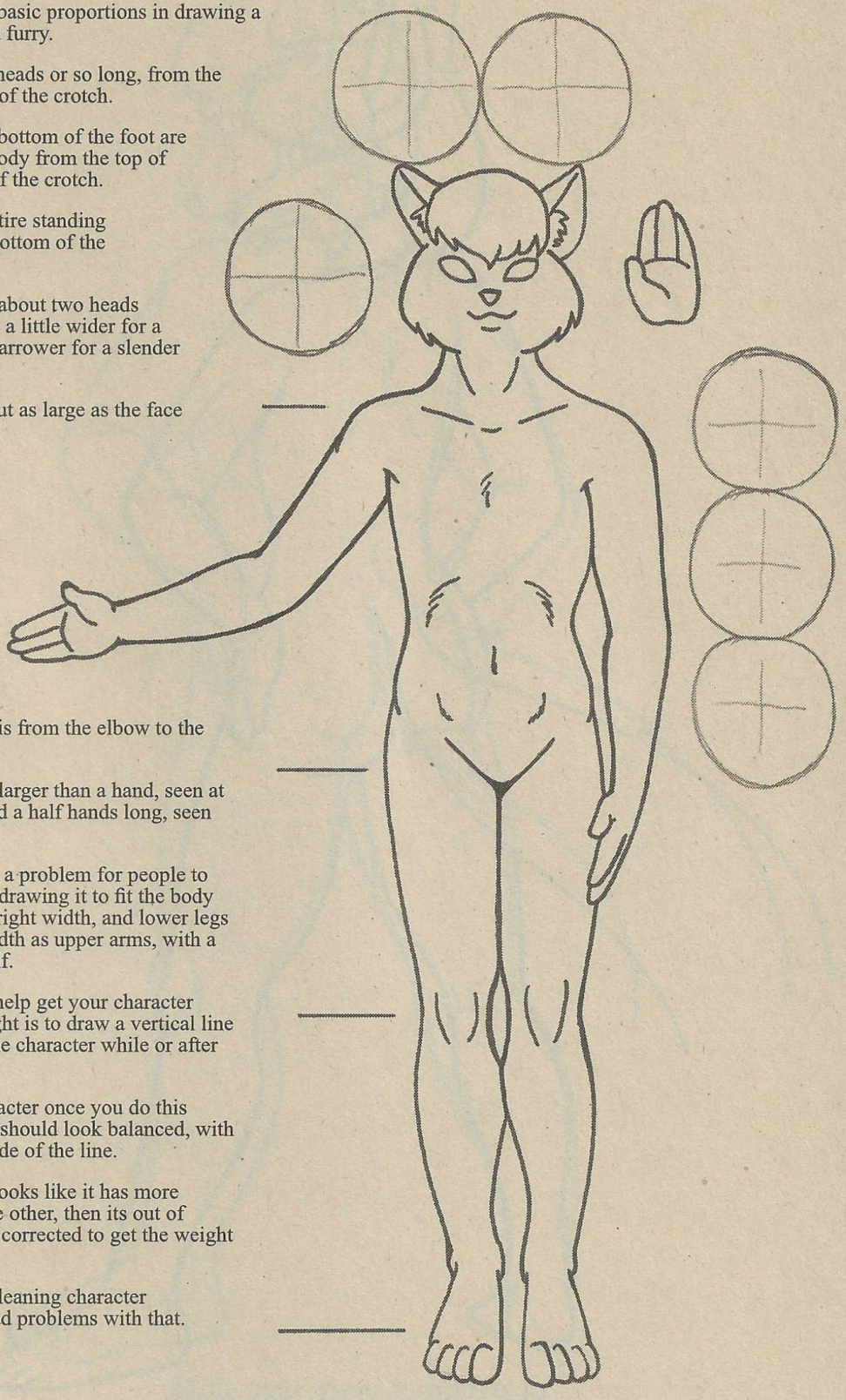
Thighs are seldom a problem for people to get right- just the act of drawing it to fit the body will give you about the right width, and lower legs are close to the same width as upper arms, with a bit more width at the calf.

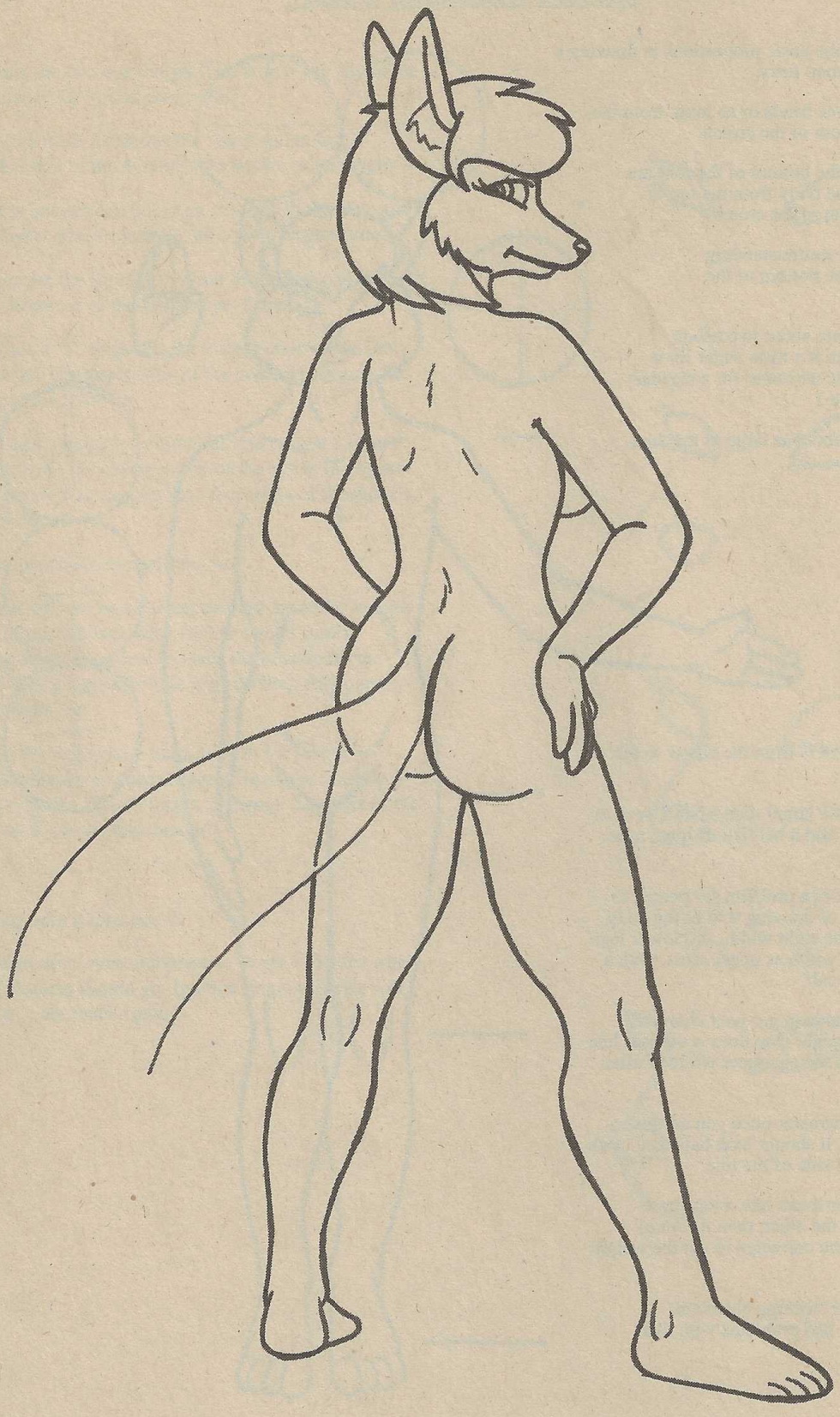
A small trick to help get your character drawing to line up straight is to draw a vertical line through the middle of the character while or after you have laid it out-

Look at the character once you do this (draw it with a ruler). It should look balanced, with equal weight to either side of the line.

If the character looks like it has more weight to one side or the other, then its out of balance and needs to be corrected to get the weight evenly distributed.

This will correct "leaning character syndrome", if you've had problems with that.

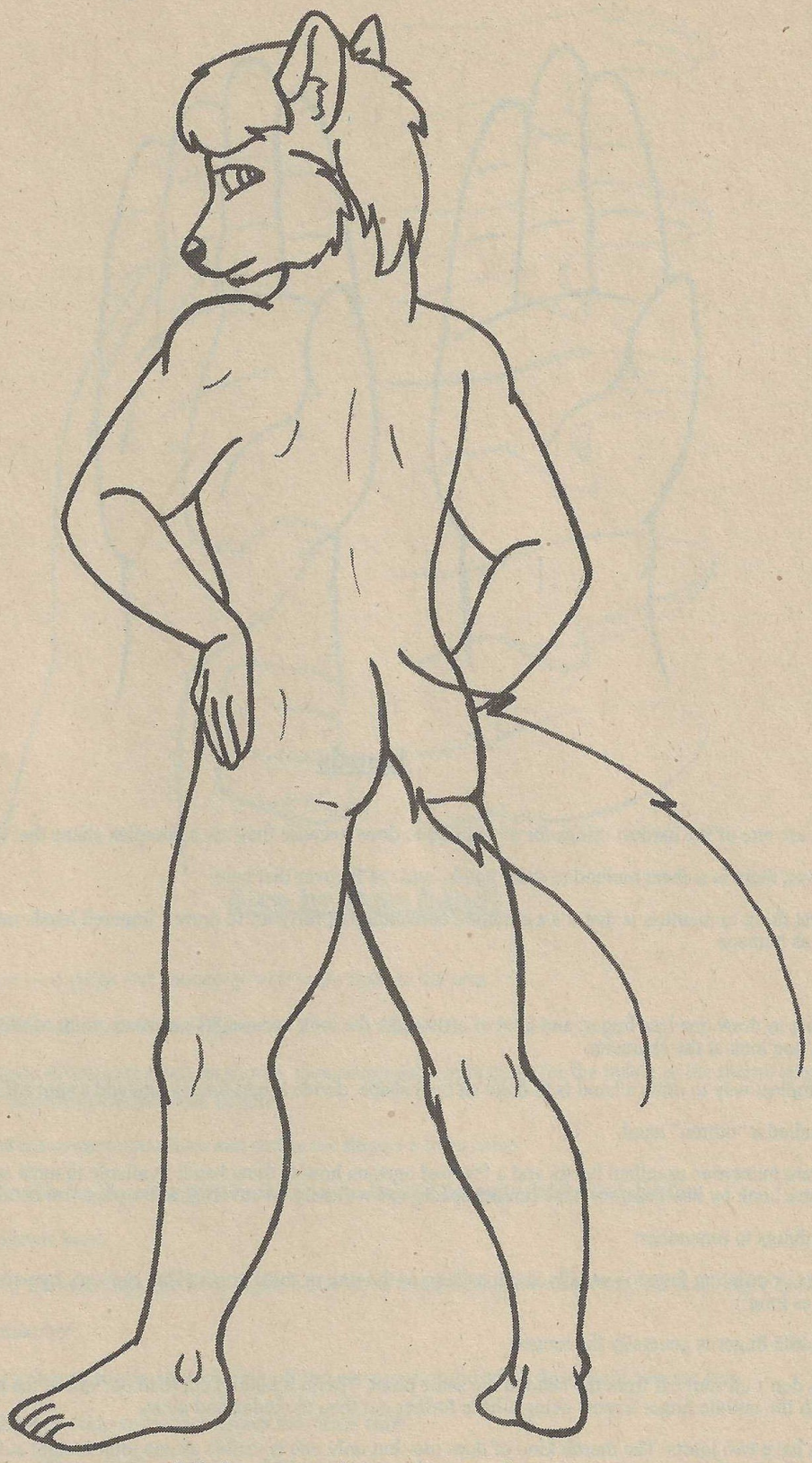




Female rear view comparison

Females generally have narrower shoulders and upper back. Wider, more rounded buttocks that are often as wide or wider than the shoulders. Smoother, more slender and less muscled arms and legs.

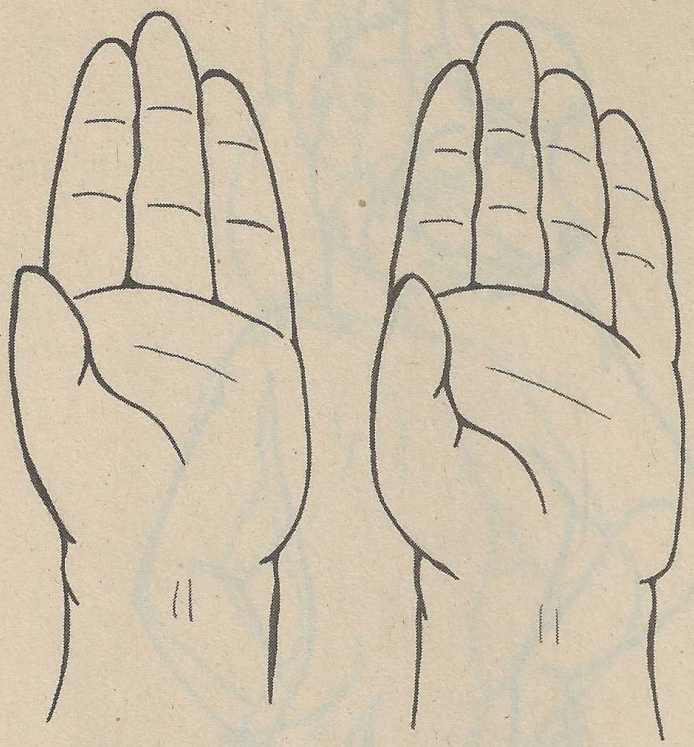
Note the tail root and where it should attach.



Male rear view comparison

Males generally have broader shoulders and upper back; with bigger arms and Smaller, more squared off buttocks and thicker, more muscular arms and legs.

Note the tail root and where it should attach.



Hands

Hands are one of the hardest things for a beginner to draw because they are a complex shape that changes constantly.

However, there is a cheat method to draw hands, and we'll cover that here.

The first thing to mention is that it's a common convention in furry art to draw 4 fingered hands rather than the 5 fingered ones we have as humans.

Why?

It IS easier to draw one less finger; and a lot of artists like the look because its one more point of difference that says "not human" when you look at the character.

The simplest way to draw a hand is to draw an oval shape, divide it into fingers and add a spur off to the side.

This is called a "mitten" hand.

There are numerous excellent books and a few bad ones on how to draw hands available in most art stores. The subject can take an entre book by itself and we have limited space, so I will only be covering a few pages on hands here.

A few things to remember:

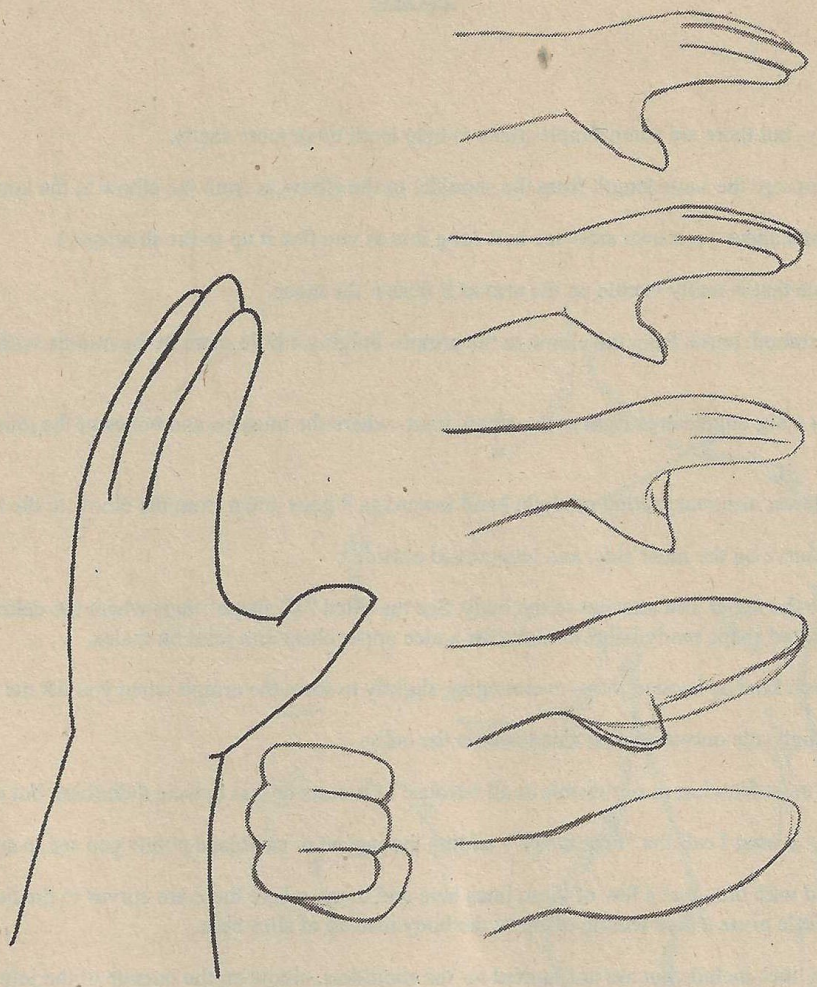
The index or pointing finger is usually about as long as the ring or third finger.(This can vary by person to person- but its usually about as long.)

The middle finger is generally the longest.

Fingers don't all start off from the hand at the same point. Theres a kind of curve to the end of the hand where the fingers sprout off, with the middle finger's roots being a little further out than the index and pinky.

Fingers have two joints. The thumb kind of does too- but only one is visible as one joint is right at the base where it comes off from the hand; this is why the thumb can swivel and the other fingers can't.

The thumb is thicker than the fingers. (Yeah, you'd think thats a no brainer- but you'd be surprised how many people forget that when they try to draw a hand!)



Step by step- hands

Start by drawing an oval shape and connect it with some lines to the arm.

Add a spurr off to the side, at the base of the oval.

Carve away the inside of the oval shape as shown, then scoop out a little more for the inside of the thumb spur. Draw a couple quick lines to divide the main hand into fingers.

Now erase some of the construction lines and define the fingers a little more.

The final effort is to thin the fingers to their final thickness and add the angles of the thumb joints.

This makes for a simple hand.

a 4 fingered hand or fist seen from the front is just a kind of 3 humped shape with an oval set at an angle for the thumb.

Some things to remember:

The fingers have 3 joints or angles after coming off the main part of the hand- the thumb has one less.

The hand is just about as wide as the face minus the cheek ruffs.

James Hardiman also does a really cool trick with his characters-

Their fingers are short one joint, and the claw tip is used to substitute for the end joint.

This makes for a hand that is more paw-like in appearance, and he just flexes the fingers more than human ones will go to make up for the shorter digit.

Arms

Arms can be tricky- but there are some simple tricks to help learn them more easily.

Remember that arms are the same length from the shoulder to the elbow as from the elbow to the knuckles of the hand.

(Use a balled fist and check your own arm- see how long it is as you flex it up to the shoulder?)

There is one muscle that is really visible on the arm as it flexes- the bicep.

Its really just one smooth curve from the elbow to the armpit- bulging a little more in the middle with slightly more of the curve above the bulge.

The lower arm has a big bulged area right at the elbow joint- where the muscles and bones of the joint are, before smoothly tapering to the hand.

Note the way the lower arm makes kind of slight bend inward as it goes down from the elbow to the hand?

Its a bit of an "S" curve on the inner side, and less curved outside.

Look also to where the upper arm attaches to the body. See the tilted "T" shape? thats where the deltoid muscle is, and remembering that little tilted shape really helps to make for a nice upper chest/arm joint on males.

(The muscle makes a kind of hooded joint- overhanging slightly to form the armpit when you lift the arm.)

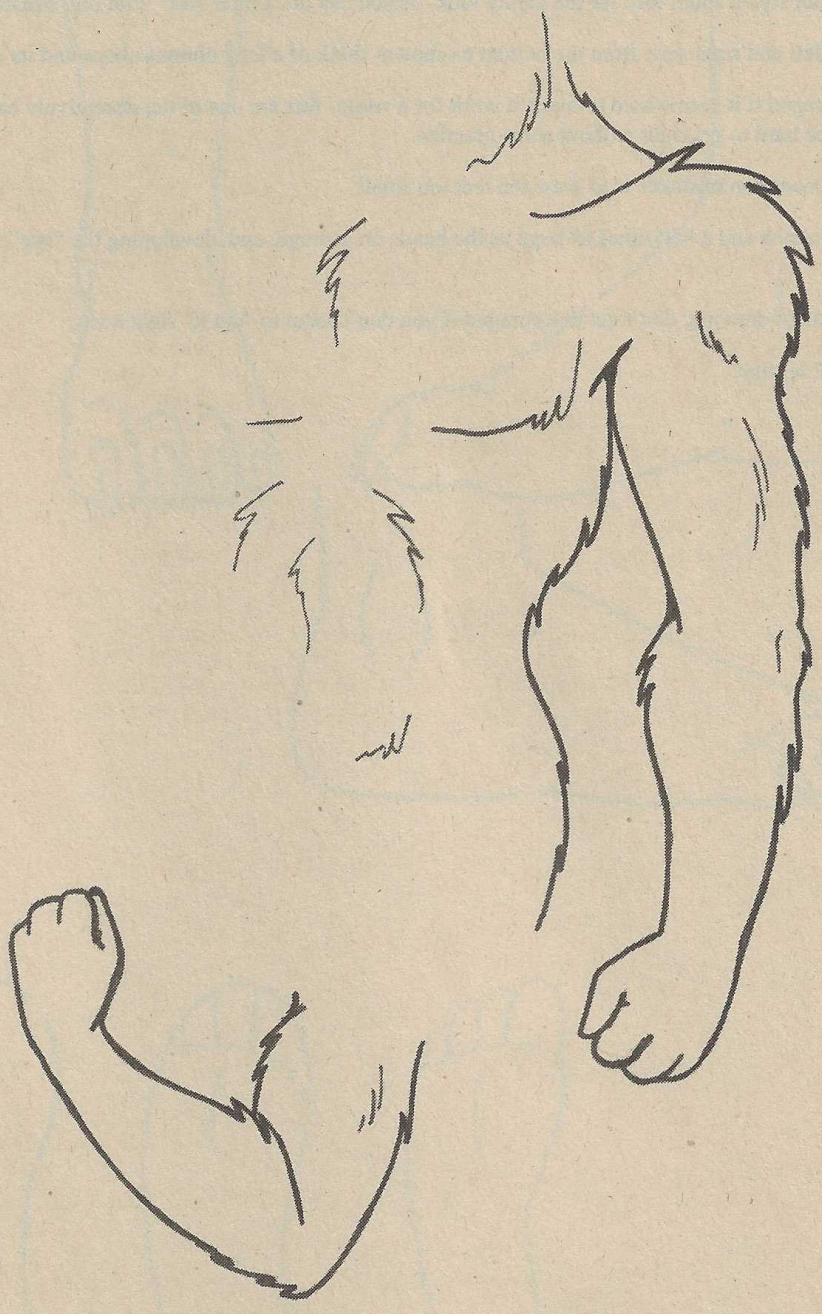
The tilt is always high side outwards, low side towards the body.

It's less visible on most females, or not visible at all because of breasts or less muscle definition, but still there.

Another point here is what I call the "fuzz factor"- adding the jagged or sawblade points you see to suggest fur.

Don't go overboard with this- just a few of these lines here and there, where there are curves to the body that would cause fur to stand up or out a little gives a nice feeling of fur to the body instead of slick skin.

Places to add these lines include but are not limited to- the shoulders, elbow on the outside of the joint, the lawline, tails obviously, outside of the calves, along the ribs- you get the general idea.



Feet

Feet are easier than hands.

The shape is just a rough triangle, regardless of what angle you see it from. (See illos.)

The bottom of the foot is two triangles joined where the toes and heel meet.

Toes can be drawn two ways-

You can do human styled small toes for the dainty look- or you can do "critter feet" with big, squared toes.

Feet are curved left and right seen from the bottom as shown- think of a long comma shape and its easier to remember.

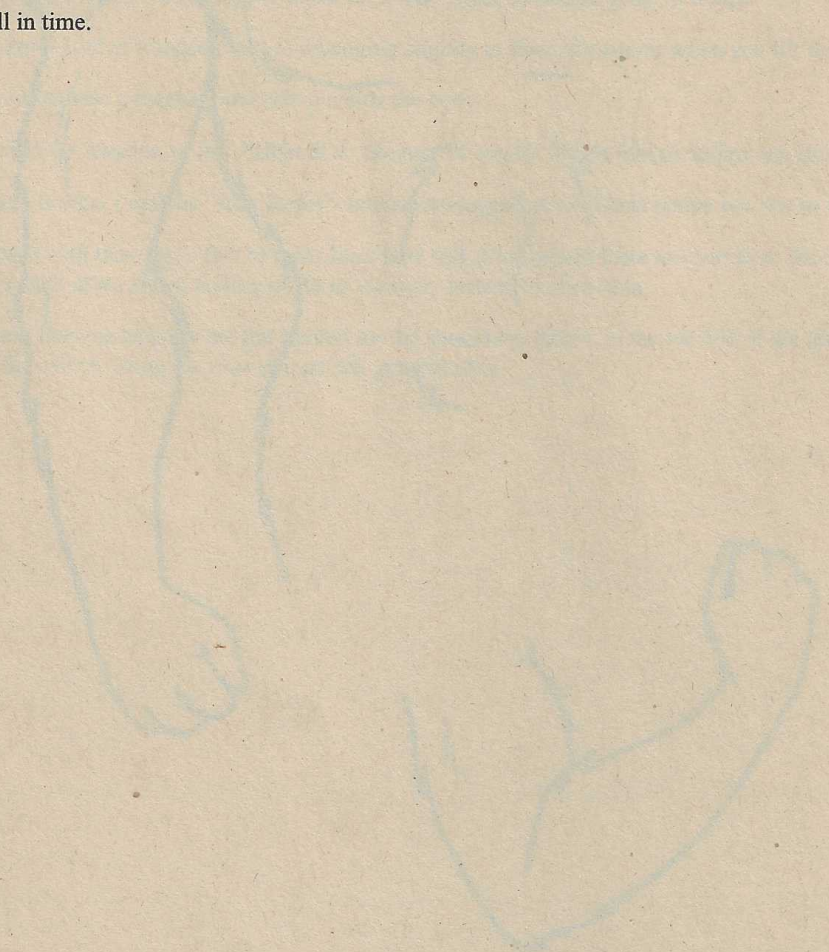
Don't be discouraged if it seems hard to make it work for a while- feet are one of the deceptively easy looking things to draw that turn out to be hard to get right without some practice.

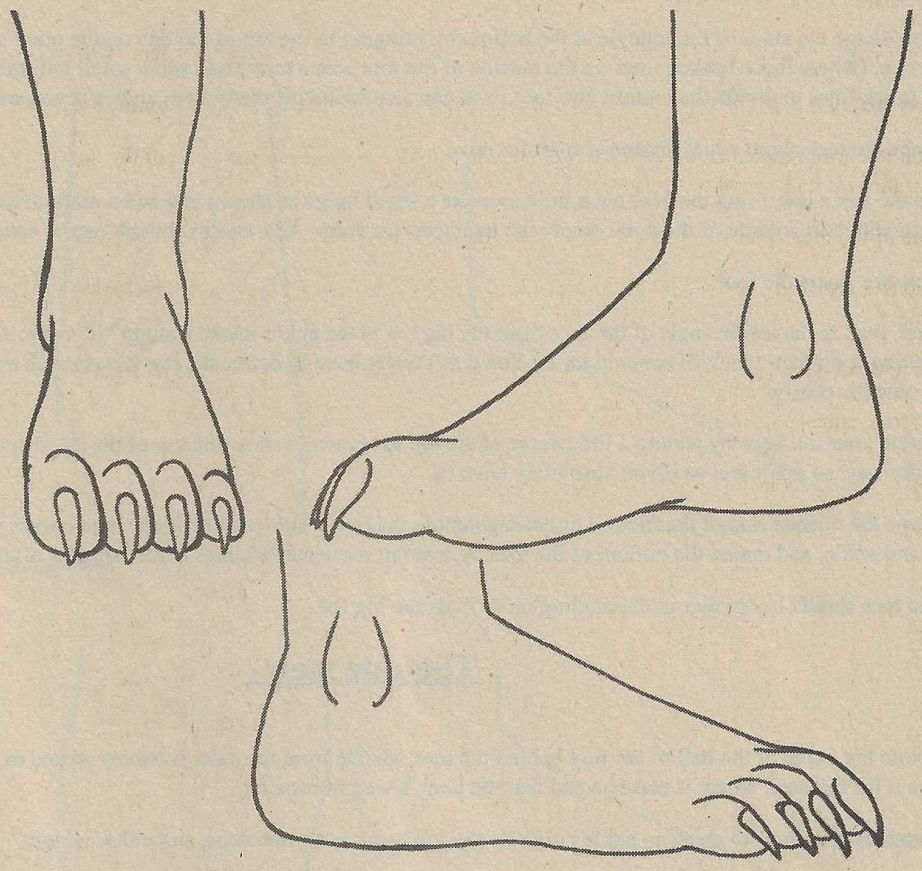
One of the most common mistakes is to draw the feet too small.

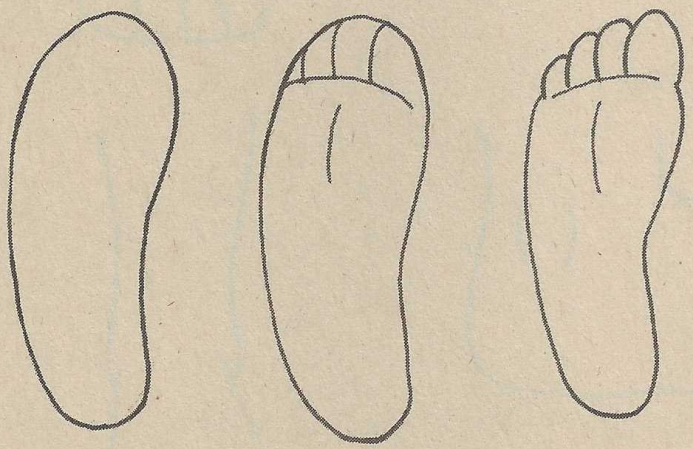
The feet are about one and a half times as large as the hands on average, and developing the "eye" for the proportions takes time.

As with all details of drawing, don't get discouraged if you don't seem to "get it" right away.

Practice cures all in time.







Foot drawing tutorial

Start by drawing the basic shape as shown- its just two vertical lines, and make one side more of a triangle shape.

The side view is a steep, lopsided triangle to start.

Now shape the sides of the triangle at the bottom by bringing in the top of the line on the other side about even with the existing one, (where those broken lines on the outside of the foot shape meet) add some small bulges for the ankle joint, and put in some quick lines to divide the bottom into toes.(You can also round off the bottom angles if you want, or leave it for now.)

Make the toes about equal distances apart for now.

On the side view, bring the heel out a little to make a small bulge as shown and add a mark to indicate the ankle joint. (The ankle is in about the middle of the point where the leg meets the foot.) Add toes as shown- again, equally apart for now.

Now we shape the foot.

First, look at the inside angle of the foot from the big toe to the ankle- make a slight "S" curve shape and thats done. (Don't sweat getting it perfect- that will come in time.) You don't really have to define the big toe as much as I have here- its done this way for now for clarity.

Define your toe lines by adding a little curve at the top as shown to show the top of the toe shape- a lot of artists don't do this, by the way, so don't feel as if you absolutely have to.

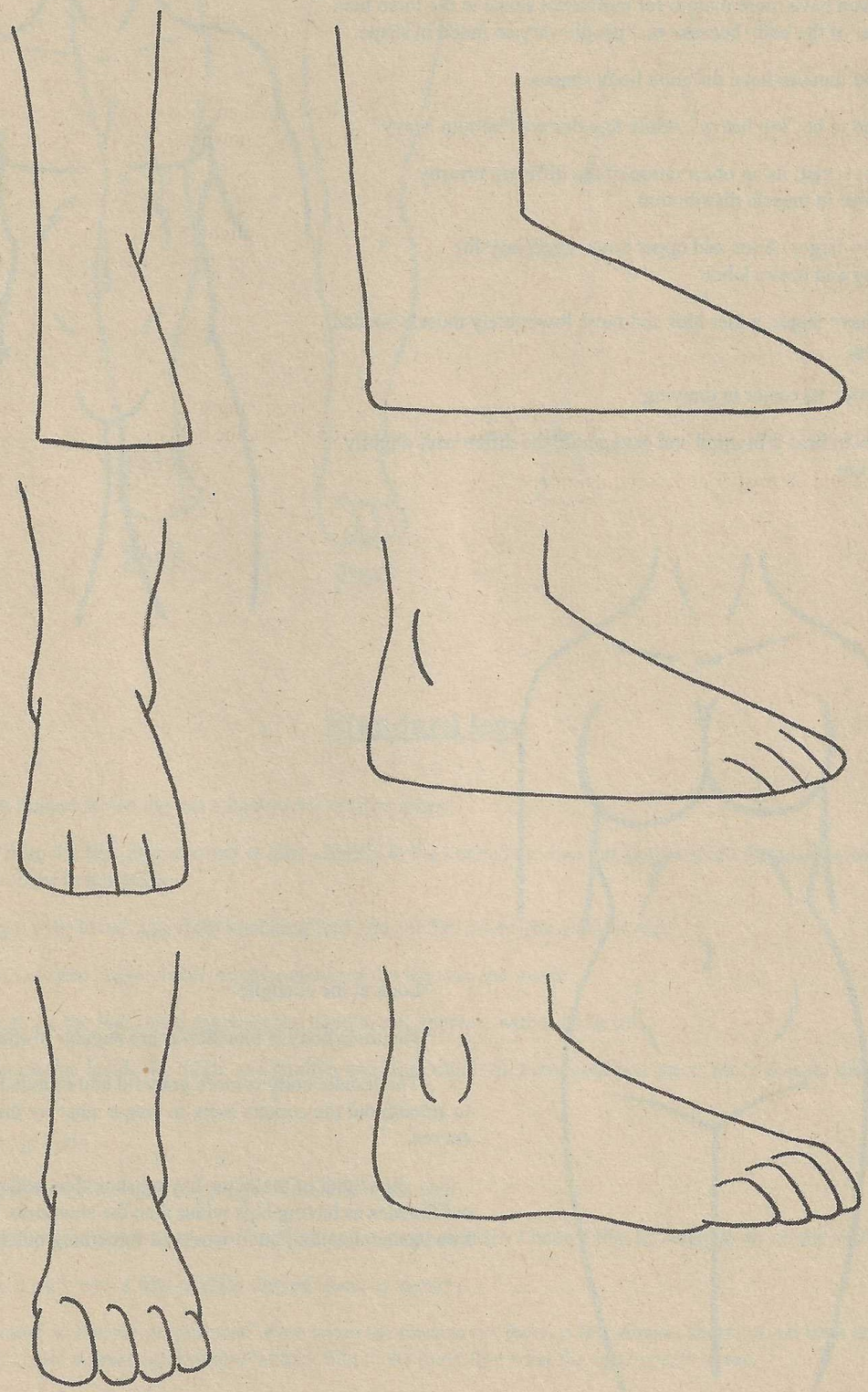
Shape the outside line of the foot by just straightening the line a little, and making some curves at the ends where it meets the toes and ankle, and define the bottom of the toes by making some curved lines at the bottoms of them, and you have a foot.

The toes should be smaller in descending order from the big toe.

The side view-

Note the curve of the ball of the foot behind the toes, visible from the side. It curves up and in for the instep, then back down again for the heel, where it makes a pad that the body's weight rests on.

I draw in both lines to show an ankle bulge for the joint- not everyone does, and either is right.



Drawing the body- and differences between male and female

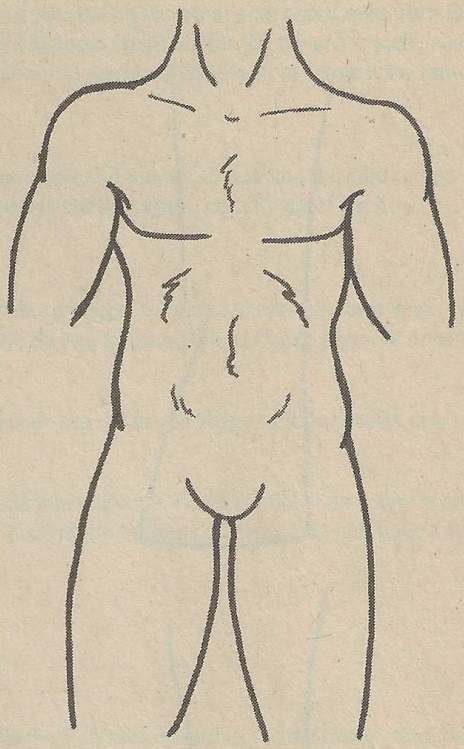
Now we get to the part of anatomy drawing that most beginners dread--

The body.

The body is actually one of the easiest things to learn to draw- though it doesn't seem like it would be.

Why?

Because you have more margin for individual shape in the torso than in any other part of the body because real people vary so much in shape.



Males and females have different body shapes.

Males tend to be "top heavy", while females are "bottom heavy"

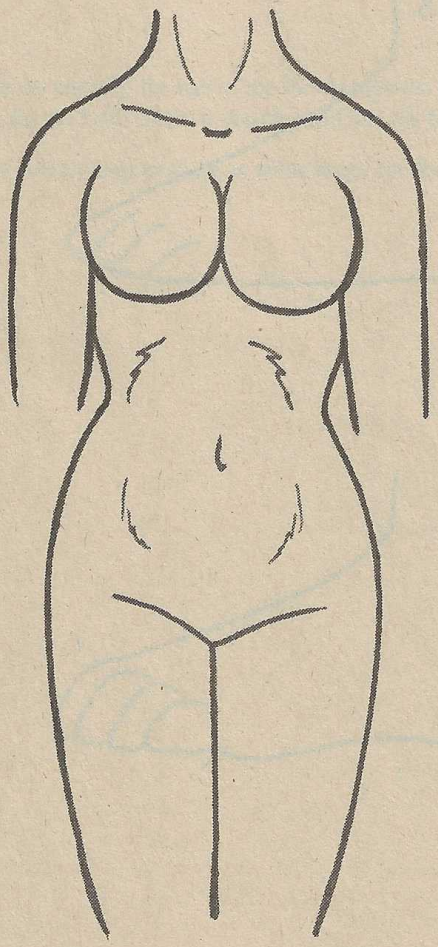
This is not sexist; its an observation of the different priority both genders have in muscle distribution.

Males have larger chests and upper arms- necessary for hunting, fighting and heavy labor.

Females have larger, wider hips and more lower body muscle needed for child bearing.

That all said, its easier in drawing

characters to bear it in mind and exaggerate the differences slightly more than real life.

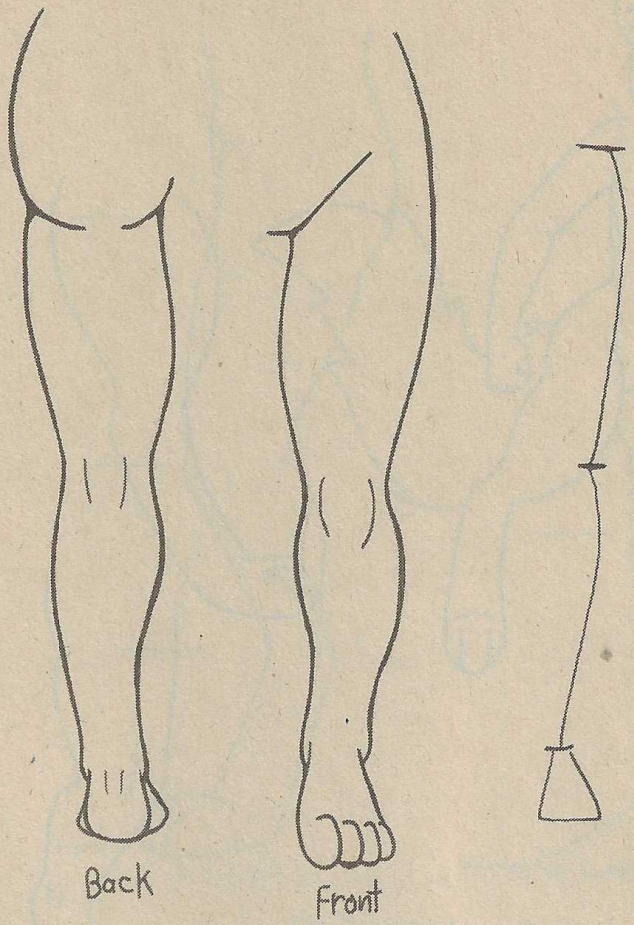


Look at the example-

The male body is blockier- more angular in shape.

The female body is more graceful and rounded- fat layers tend to smooth out the corners more to create what we think of as pleasing curves.

Just think of males as having shoulders wider than the hips, and females as having hips wider than the shoulders. Its a bit of a broad generalization, but it works as something quick to remember.



Standard legs

The standard human styled leg has a double curve to its shape.

This comes from the hip joint, curving in very slightly to the knee joint, then out again a short distance before making a more pronounced curve to the ankle.

This is to keep your lower legs from knocking into one another when you walk or run.

There is more muscle bulge visible on the outside of the leg than the inside.

Again, its because the legs come together and need to not interfere with movement.

There's a little bulge inside the thigh, and another one from under the knee area that tapers more sharply than on the outside of the leg.

A quick note on butts

A lot of beginners tell me they can't draw female bottoms well.

I think the problem is that they try to draw them too narrow, and don't realize that its better to err on the side of plump.

There is also a trick with a few slightly curved lines, as shown-

These give more of a sense of "fullness" even when the mass is not there; a few simple, short curved lines added to the inside of the thigh create a sense of feminine buttock that looks more like what the eye expects to see.

Male butts are usually more square shaped and have a less obvious curve on the bottom side.

It's a simple trick- but it makes a big difference.

Digitigrade legs

A style I do not use myself very often, some people prefer the more animal-like look of the digitigrade, or "jack leg" design.

Digitgrade legs have some attraction for the beginner in that it is a simpler, less complex shape and easier to master at first than straight, or plantigrade legs.

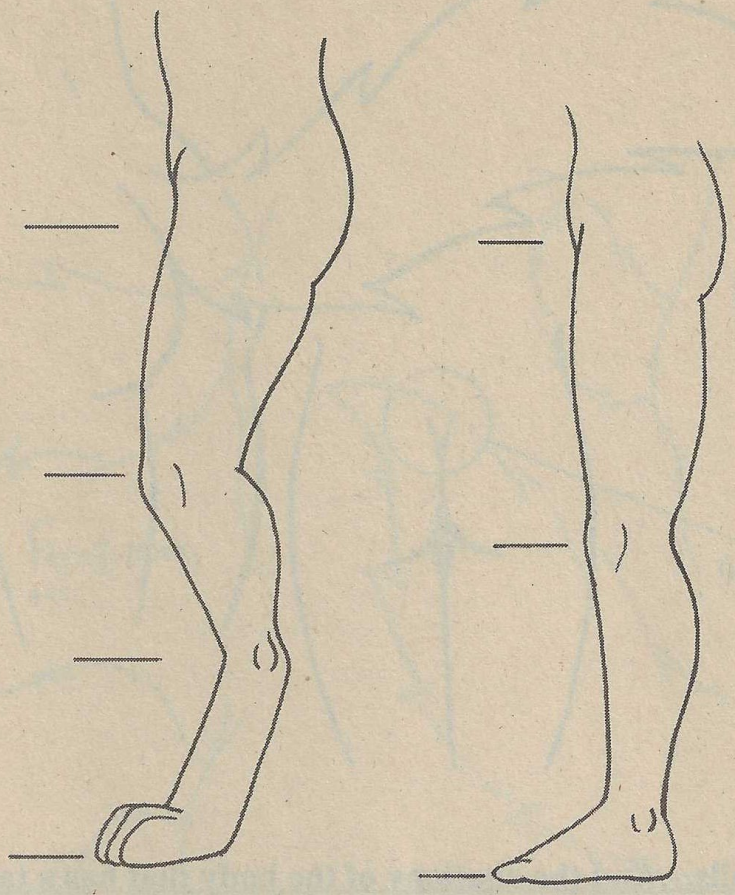
The illustration shows the two main types of this style of leg-

The "true animal" type, which is more or less an animal on its hind legs, and the more complex anthro jack leg.

Note that in the more anthro version, the foot pad is larger in size and proportion, and is straighter in shape; more verticle in pose. It also tapers wider as it goes down from ankle to the bend for the toes.

The animal leg has two main curves to its thigh- its more of an oval shape from the buttocks down, and with the lower leg coming down at an angle before ending in a smaller foot pad which has little or no taper- or even in some cases a reversed taper. (Wider from ankle to toes.)

Some artists drawing this type of leg do not really make much of a seperate foot shape, but rather blend it into the lower leg itself as a sharper curve or bend at the bottom with a few lines dividing the end into toes.



Digitrade legs 2

Here we can see the ideal or typical proportions of how to draw jacked legs.

Note that the human leg is basically two sections, equal in length- but the digitigrade leg is three seperate, equal or near equal sections.

Tastes vary, but to make this type of leg really work and look good, the real trick and skill is to shorten the thigh and shin/ calf and lengthen the ankle/foot.

Note the foot/toes area is large to take the increased weight.

It also often looks good to make the thigh a little more muscular- but you can do thin and smooth muscles here and it looks just as good.

The main thing to remember, and which is often forgotten in drawing jacked legs is to keep the proportions to the body constant!

Do NOT draw the legs longer than they should be to the body!

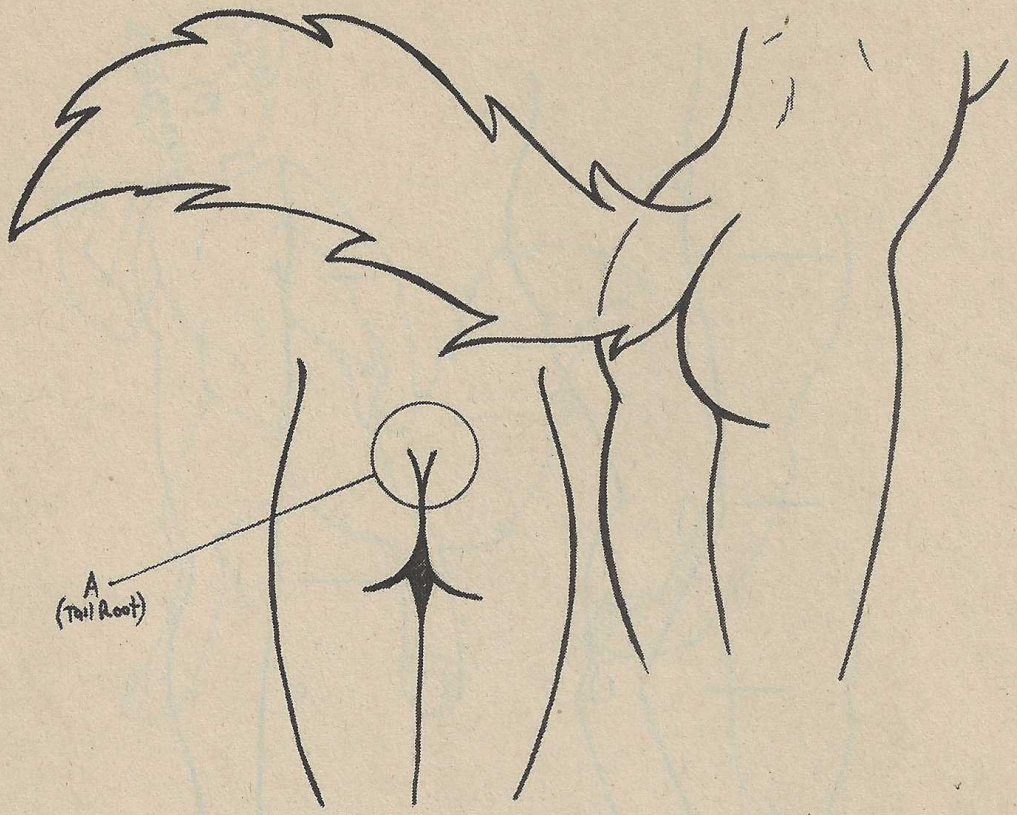
Shorten the thigh and calf, lengthen the foot and ankle.

3 roughly equal parts that are one half of the total length of the entire character from the crotch down and you have a good looking digitigrade leg.

Note the toes-

They are large, slab-like in shape, and taper up slightly from the base of the toe to the far end before the curve down to the toenail.

Only about three toes at most should be visible from this angle- animals have the larger, longer toes in the middle and smaller ones to both sides. Human toes run from the big toe down to the small.



Tails…And the anatomy of the body that has a tail.

Tails are problem for a lot of artists.

The main problem is that most people don't understand what a tail is, and how it attaches to the body.

The tail is an extension of the spine- It comes off the bottom of the spinal cord and therefore straight down for the first couple of inches down the length of the divide of the buttocks before it can curve up and away from the body.

The tail has vertebrae in it- it's a string of small bones, and can only bend so far.

It's a little known fact by the way that humans are born with short and functional tails all the time- its common enough to be a recognized medical condition.

I've seen the photos.

A lot of artists place the tail in one of two poorly thought out locations- Either too high; coming out of the lower back.

Or too low; coming out of what should be the anus. (Sorry, there's no polite way to say it)

Look at the illustration-

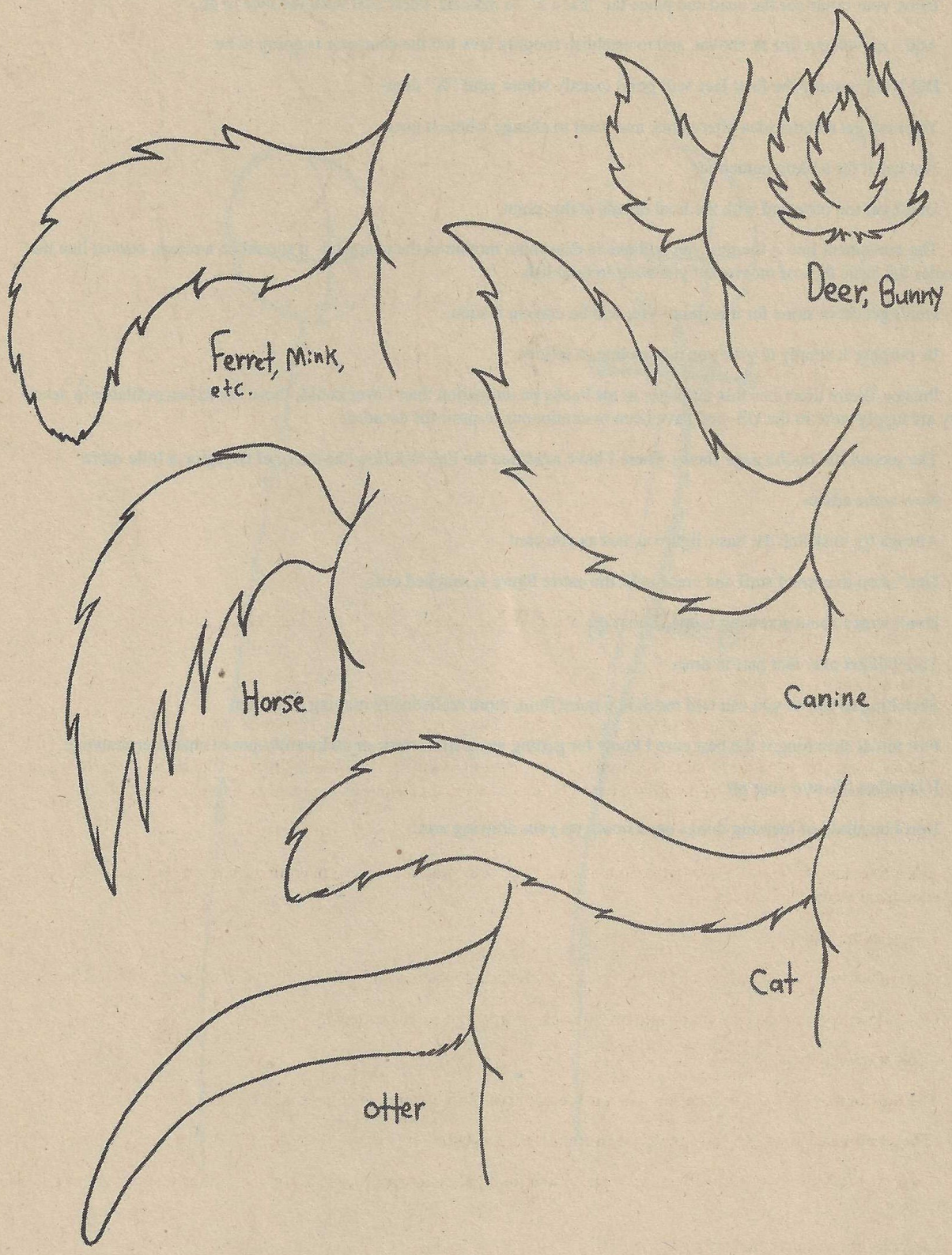
The tail comes off the end of the spine in a graceful curve, from where the coccyx is in humans.

(The small fused bones we have there are in fact a vestigial tail.)

If we use the logic of anatomy, the proper placement for a tail on a furry is right at the top of the buttocks, at the divide of the cleavage.

(See illo- the small circled area.)

That's all there is to it, really.


Ferret, Mink, etc.
Deer, Bunny
Horse
Canine
Cat
otter

First up-

The initial head balloon and movement line.

Draw your circle for the head and place the "Face X" to indicate where you want the face to go.

Add a movement line as shown, and to establish roughly how tall the character is going to be.

DO NOT assume the final face will point exactly where your "X" does-

You may get a better idea afterwards, and want to change where it goes.

Just use it for a basic guideline.

Don't get too obsessed with the final details at this point.

The movement line is the line you will use to determine motion in the character- it should be a rough, curved line that indicates the basic flow of movement you want to establish.

Don't get set in stone for this point- you will be erasing it soon.

Its purpose it simply to give you a guideline to follow.

Preston Blaire describes this far better in his books on animation than I ever could- those books are available in nearly every art supply store in the US- and have been in continuous re-print for decades.

The second illo on the page shows where I have modified the line to follow the curve of the spine a little more.

Now some advice.

Always try to sketch the basic figure as fast as you can!

Don't stop to correct stuff and erase until the entire figure is roughed out.

Don't worry about screwing it up-

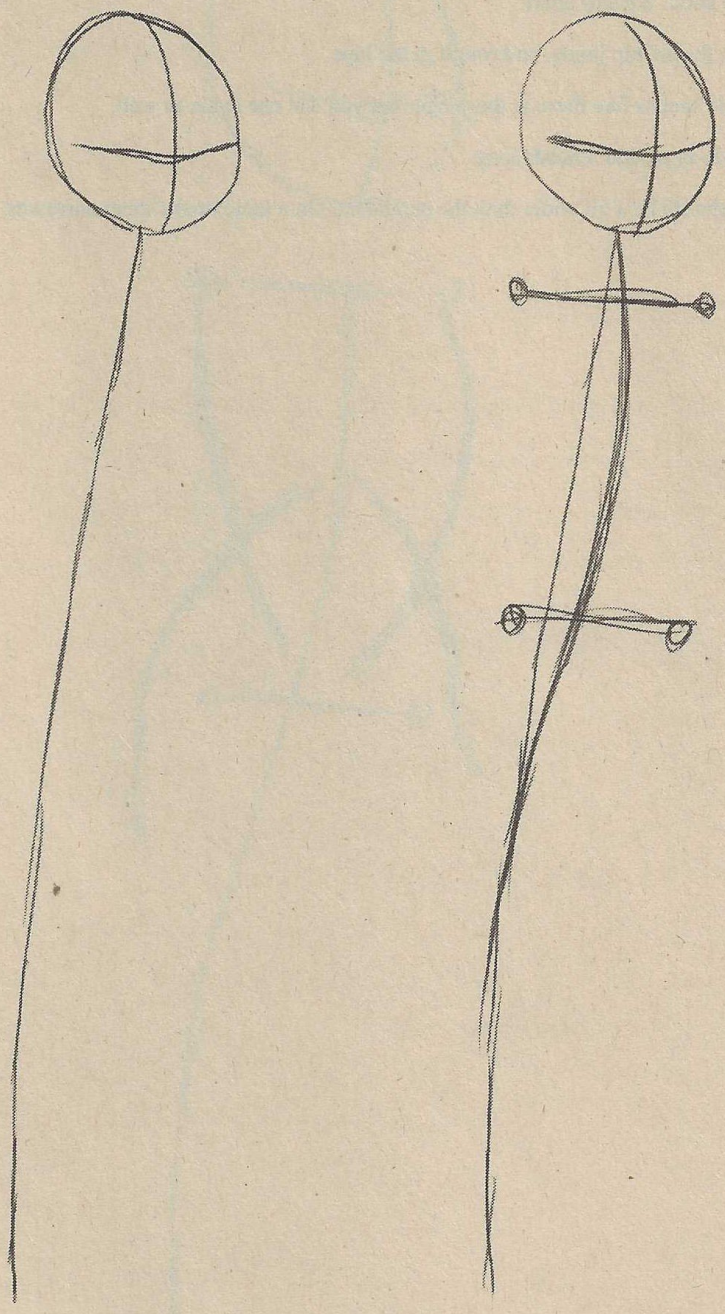
You will get over that part in time.

Sketching as fast as you can will result in a more fluid, more realistically moving character.

Fast initial sketching is the best cure I know for getting away from static or awkwardly-posed character drawing.

It breathes life into your art.

Don't be afraid of messing things up- Loosen up your drawing arm!



Okay, now we move on to some actual detail....

I'm adding some details here I normally skip- after over 10 years of drawing furry figures, I no longer use the shoulder and hip joint referrence point balls- but you may find it much easier to do so.

These represent the rough areas where the basic joints that define a human body will be based around.

Draw in the points for the shoulders as shown.

The shoulders average about 2 heads apart.

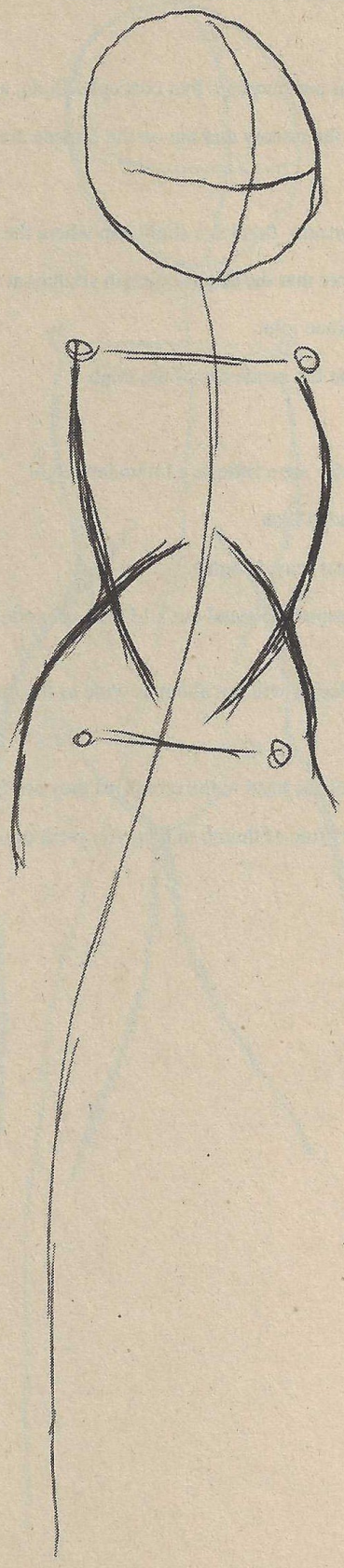
Draw in a set of points for the hip joints, and rough in the hips.

I have used two triangle shapes like these at this stage, but you can use ovals as well.

Remember that the body is around 3 heads long.

On a female, the hips should be a bit wider than the shoulders. On a male, make them narrower.

Lets move on.



Next up..

Defining the torso and thighs.

The torso is an hourglass shape-

It's generally wider at the top for males, and wider at the bottom for females.

Not always of course-

But furries are often somewhat idealised, so for our purposes that concept will do, and a little exaggeration helps.

Add the lines for the hips, noting that for now the tummy and hip on the far side are just a single line.

They'll be defined later.

The thighs do not come to a single point underneath- there is a slight gap where the legs meet.

The crotch line is just a shallow "V" shape. Note that the thighs pinch in slightly at the top before meeting the crotch.

The leg tapers smoothly from the body to the knee joint.

On some women there is more of an "indent" at the inside top of the thigh-

(Where the leg meets the crotch.)

But that is more obviously visible in women who are a little or a lot underweight.

To me, it looks better to go with the more rounded look.

Of course, this is personal preferrence and others may disagree.

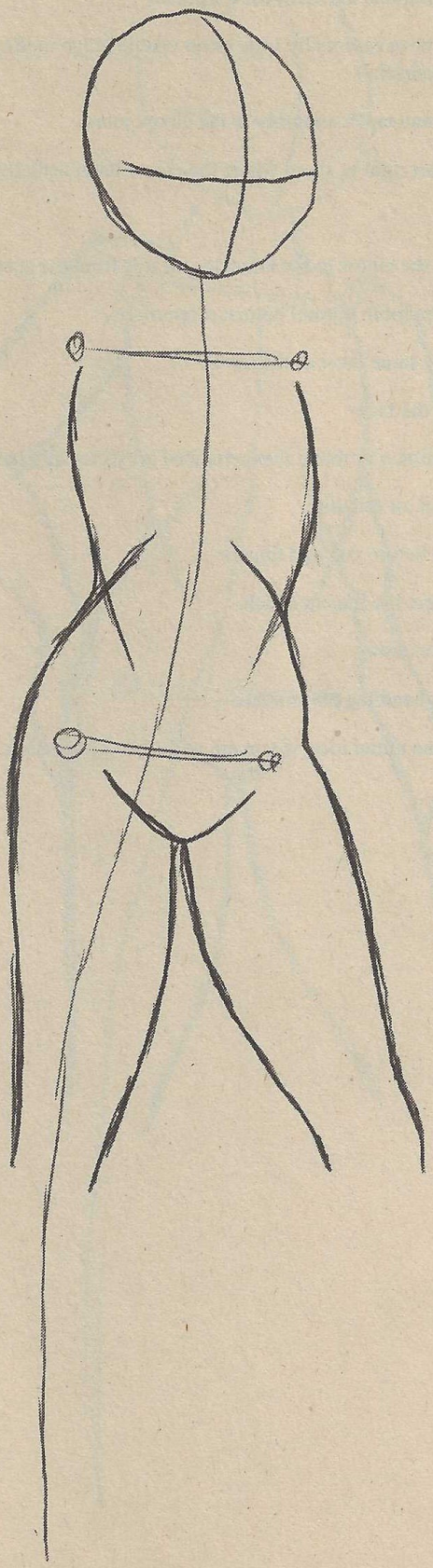
Just remember that limbs that are too thin in proportion stand out a LOT in artwork, where they might not be so obvious in real life.

Make your upper arms at least as wide as the hands will be- about as wide as the face from eye to eye.

A small note to remind-

Most people are the same length from the top of the head to the crotch, as they are from the crotch to the bottom of the feet.

The crotch makes a convenient "halfway point" rule of thumb to help you work out body proportions.



And we get into more of the actual definition...

I have now added arms and hands.

Note also that I have now begun to define the shoulders and pay special attention to the way the upper arms taper from the shoulder to the elbow joint- then widen again briefly for the muscles and joints of the elbow- before tapering again to the wrists.

This girl has fairly typical muscle definition in her arms for a woman-

Unless they lift weights, most females have essentially little or no visible bulge in the arms for the deltoid, (shoulder muscle,) or bicep. (Upper arm, or "Popeye" muscle.)

The upper arm will be wide at the top, and taper smoothly to the elbow joint.

The widening of the lower arm will start right at about where the elbow itself actually bends.

While we're at it, just to recap-

The arm is about the same length from the elbow to the knuckles, as it is from the shoulder to the elbow.

The joint forms just about the halfway point in normal human proportions.

And the elbow joint is usually about the same level as the navel.

The hand is just about the same size as the face-

That should help you with the most common problem inexperienced artists usually have-

They draw the hands and arms too small, or too thin.

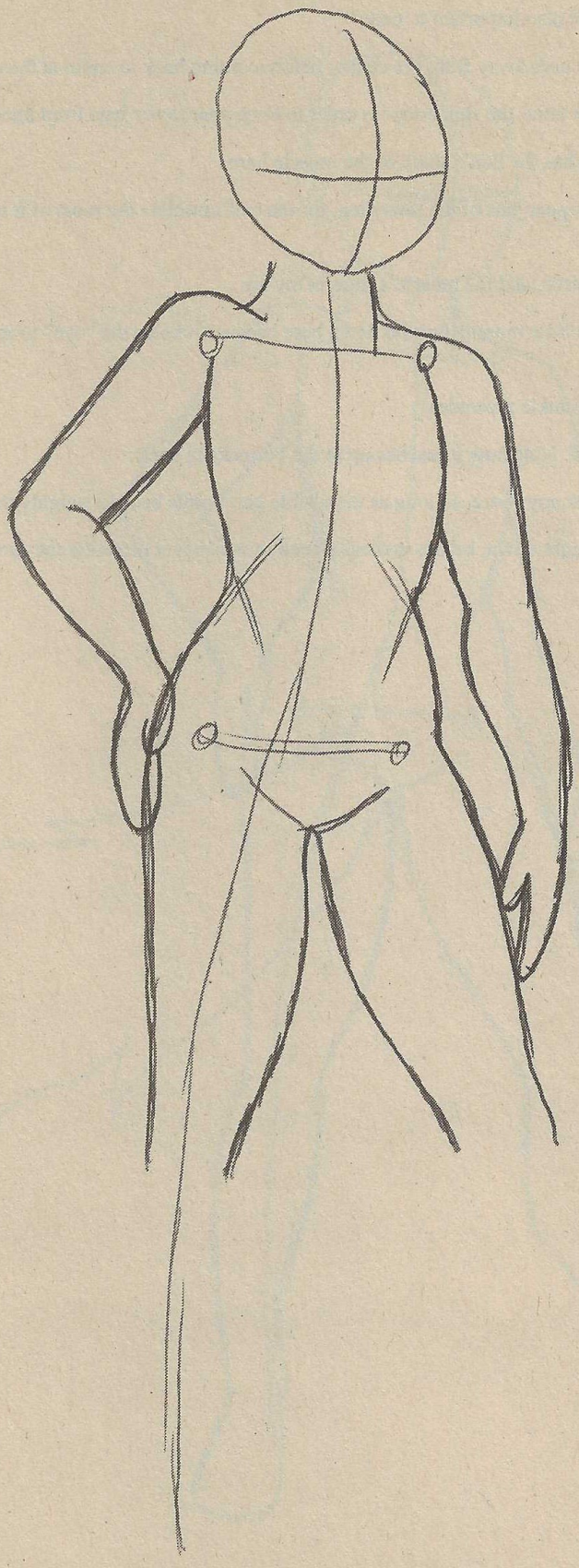
The hands are generally a funnel shape before you add fingers.

Narrow at the wrist, tapering out to where the fingers attach.

Your ideas can change and evolve as you draw.

Don't be afraid to experiment with arm/hand/leg placements.

Almost anything can look better than the initial idea, if you are willing to play with it.



Next stage....

Lower legs have begun to appear. Note the feet are only offsided triangles at this point, with more taper towards the outside of the body.

One detail on the lower legs are also important to note-

Notice the way the lower legs curve away from the center, before coming back in again at the ankle?

Real legs have this curve in the tibia- the shin bone- in order to keep your lower legs from knocking together as you walk.

The outer part of the lower leg has the lion's share of the muscle here.

There is an initial bulge in the upper part of the lower leg, for the calf muscles- but most of it is on the outside edge of the leg.

I tend to exaggerate both the curve, and the muscle a little in my art.

Not much- just enough to get a little more definition down here because it helps the "eye" to recognise and define the lower leg a bit better.

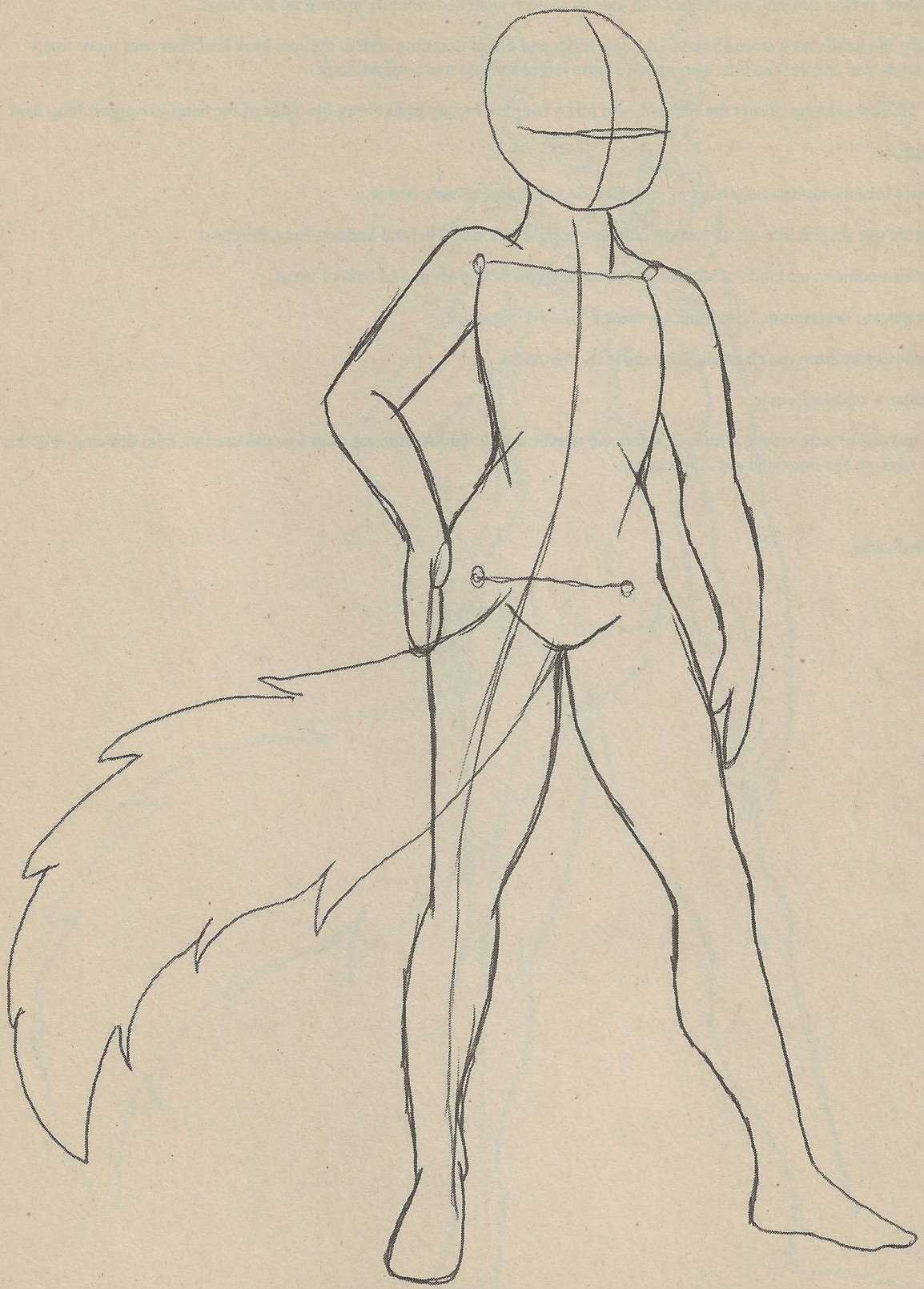
There is also a bulge where the ankle protrudes.

I have also begun to add the tail. Note how it reaches up to the buttocks in back.

From this angle it can go almost anywhere, so long as the visible part points back to roughly the right area of the buttocks.

The tail will come initially straight down, before making a bend to whichever direction the furry is holding it at.

Next stage...



Okay-

Time to rough in the face, hair and other bits.

We have now added breasts, and the definition for the diaphragm, chest and belly.

The navel is now present, and fingers and toes have been sketched in while firming up the hands.

Mostly, the hands have been slimmed down a little, and finger detailing added. the feet have had their toes more finely detailed, and as you can see the toes were made a little larger for that more animal look.

Hair for now is bangs across the forhead, and just a couple of wavy lines along the sides of the head to suggest long hair.

Breasts-

Female breasts are basically bags of jelly-like fat with some muscle inside.

They are not shaped like a ball, and do not hang weightless, like a helium balloon from the chest.

They also come in all kinds of shapes and sizes- and can be shown in all kinds of ways.

Best quickie description I can think of, think a tapered bag shape.

It pushes away from the chest slightly, and it IS rounded.

It just isn't a perfect circle.

This girl has breasts maybe a little less defined, maybe a little more shapeless than I would use in a final drawing- but this book is all ages, so the fine details will not appear.

Next stage.

The Last part- inks

You can now see the complete head features-

The long muzzle and long hair with bangs, which I like.

Note the final details that are defined for this last stage.

The hips and upper rib cage are now more defined- the actual swell of the upper hip bone is now drawn in, as well as the lower edge of the ribs/diaphragm before the nip in for the pinch of the waist.

The construction for the tail lines are erased.

There is a line added to the neck/throat for the muscles that hold the head upright. There is one on each side, but only one needs to be defined unless you want more muscle showing, or it looks more "right" to you.

There is a small line for the pit of the clavical- at the base of the throat where it forms a little hollowed area.

Note the slight curvature of the forearms, and the very slight taper of the upper arms from the shoulder to the elbow before they widen a little for the elbow joint; and then taper again from the elbow to the wrist.

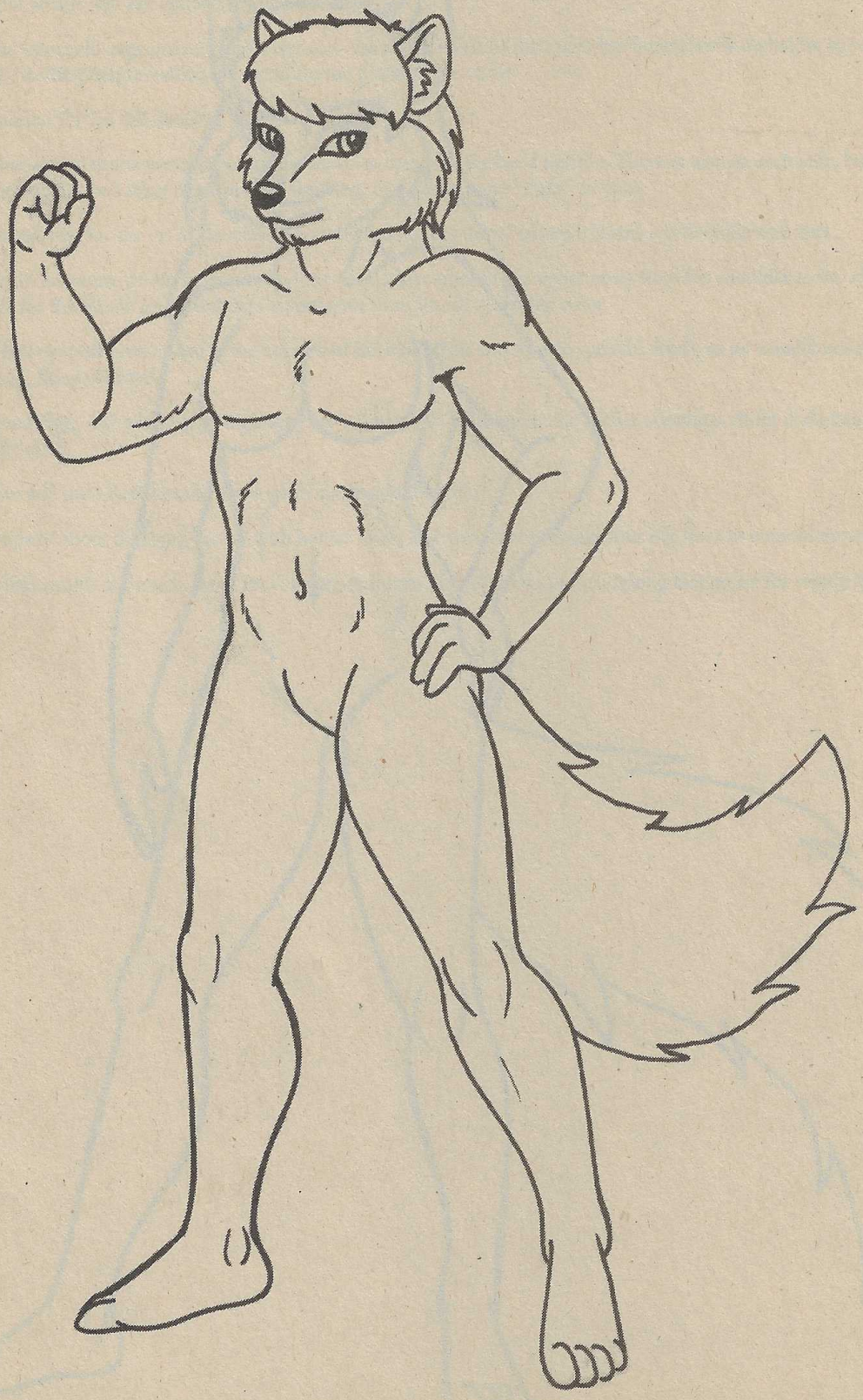
Eyes have had eyelash lines added at the corners of the eyes. This is a female specific detail, as its usually not desirable for males to show long, fine eyelashes...

The ears stand high, and notice how high they are on the skull. Remember the earlier comment about them being up around the top third of the skull.

I also tend to add little fluff lines to show some fur inside the ears.

Inking is mostly about finishing the art with bolder lines, and you want to make your ink lines as smooth as possible.

More than that I can't say much about now; again, there are tons of books on just inking that go on for whole chapters on the subject.



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shandafa@cyberback.com

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